

LETTERS

LATELY PRINTED IN THE
FREEMAN'S AND HIBERNIAN JOURNALS,

UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF

P. LEYAL: *h*

ADDRESSED TO

HIS GRACE THE
DUKE OF LEINSTER.

AND NOW REPUBLISHED

AT THE DESIRE OF THE

APOLLO SOCIETY,

AND OF SEVERAL

RESPECTABLE CITIZENS.

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M.D.CC.LXXX.

Apollo-Society, May 24, 1780.

At a numerous Meeting of the APOLLO-SOCIETY,

RESOLVED,

THAT the ingenious author of the letters lately published under the signature of P. LEYAL, be requested by advertisement, and he is hereby requested, to reprint the same in a pamphlet; as being happily calculated to promote that spirit of MODERATION, which seems, at this juncture, essentially necessary to the *well-being* of Ireland.

Signed by Order,

SAMUEL WHYTE, Secretary.



LETTERS, &c.

TO HIS GRACE THE
DUKE OF LEINSTER

LETTER I.

On the Temper of the Times.

MY LORD,

IT is not the casual circumstance of high birth ; it is not the supernumerary advantage of state or title ; it is not the extensiveness of possessions, but the superiority of worth that excites my respect, and induces me to call your attention to this address : an address, my Lord, which, in being directed to you, is made, as I imagine, not so much to the injured legislator, as to the benevolent man ; not so much to the maligned Duke, as to the more exalted patriot, who, blessed, like the illustrious Athenian of old*, with benevolence too ardent to be cooled by ingratitude, can pity, and still wish to befriend, even those, who seem rejoiced in exercising a privilege, to censure and condemn.

* Aristides.

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Have

Have you, my Lord, happily emulative of your noble father, constantly attended, in the expenditure of your fortune, to the welfare of the kingdom from which it is acquired?—Have you cherished an attachment to the *rights*, and an affectionate concern for the *interests* of your native land?—Have you found the charm of prosperity to exist in the truly enviable opportunity it commands of alleviating distress?—Have you endeavoured to be useful, by being as *active* in public, as you have been “*practicable*” in private, to the humblest citizen who required your aid?—Have you, as a commoner, invariably supported the interests of your country; and, as a peer, conveyed the sentiments of a distressed people into the House of Lords, and given them, if even nobility exalted by worth could give them, additional energy?—Have you been the *soldier* of your fellow citizens while they needed defence, and their *advocate* while a grievance was to be redressed, and is a libel to be your reward?—Believe me, my Lord, however severe, there is nothing extraordinary in your fate. It has been experienced by the most illustrious *patriots* of antiquity; by those whose wisdom and worth was *not* less conspicuous in the proofs they gave of being able to *despise*, than in a determined resolution to *deserve* praise.

But, my Lord, though you were unconcerned, we should yet have too many and melancholy proofs,

proofs, that licentiousness was not the disgrace of antiquity alone, but is, unhappily, the *many-tongued* monster of modern times. We need not, with the avidity of a gleaner, stalk over the political field to collect scattered facts, which are the remains of *her* industry. They are conveniently and almost every where to be had. Look, my Lord, to the procedure of a *nobleman*, whose administration, I may venture to predict, will form an epoch in the annals of your country, as *splendid* and *interesting* as any they have to boast. Consider what he had to do upon his accession to government, and what has been done. Consider the predicament in which his station placed him. How almost certain was *he* of censure, how uncertain of praise! How critically was *he* circumstanced as to a thousand particulars, how delicately as to all!—Did the loom forget its labours, and was he not anxious it should re-assume them? Did our manufactures droop, and was he not wishful to revive them?—Look to his encouragement of *letters* amongst us; an encouragement as *generous* as it is *unprecedented*; an encouragement which, if the advancement of science be conducive to the interests of humanity, deserves even more than the applause it has received; even more than the applause of the few, *whose souls are touched with hallowed fire*, and who will continue to confess his worth, while literature has a reputation in Ireland.—Recollect, my Lord, the various unavailing endeavours of our numerous Catholic

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lic brethren, to obtain a relaxation, for which the generous principles of Christianity pled, of those once-needful, but now, I am inclined to believe, unnecessary laws, which, LAYING AN INTERDICT UPON CONSCIENCE speak only *penalty* upon *penalty*.—Recollect how vain the many arguments adduced, even by the beneficence of PROTESTANT CHARITY, to shew that intolerance but steels the mind; that spiritual subjection is beyond the reach of human ordinances; that coercion, as to matters purely speculative, is productive of hypocrisy at best; that toleration boasts a genial influence even beyond the Christian states; and that the welfare of this kingdom peculiarly demanded a *cement* of *party* and *party*; a political, a social alliance of Protestant and Romanist; and, to this recollection, add a remembrance that the *relief* obtained by this very numerous body, who, upon being permitted, have shewn themselves remarkably earnest in giving the most solemn security for their allegiance to their sovereign, *was reserved to distinguish* the administration, to which I have endeavoured to do justice, as well as the characters of those patriots, who were encouraged by, and co-operated with your Grace, in the *beneficent work of mercy*.—Look, my Lord, to the many statutes which have lately enlarged and ennobled our code—Look to that truly laudable œconomy which, operating for a nation, has prevented an increase of the pension-list *—

* See a late address from a respectable Grand Jury of the County of Meath.

But,

But, above all, look to the *scenes* which open before us! which *brighten*, while we look! which *expand* while they *brighten*! which shew the world and its wealth as soliciting our COMMERCE, and COMMERCE as making them *our own*!—Look, my Lord, to the blessings of a FREE TRADE; those blessings which were not reached even by the *hopes* of our ancestors! Those blessings, which the magic of anticipation already realizes; which the approaching moment shall animate and secure; and for which we shall be indebted to the virtuous and moderate conduct of a free people and patriotic parliament, co-operating with the *manly efforts* and *honest representations* of an illustrious VICEROY, interested in the success of this country, but as a citizen of the British empire, who, scorning to *restrain* his *good-will* to a spot, can extend its *embraces* to a whole people. LOOK, I SAY, MY LORD, TO THESE FACTS, WHICH ENERGETICALLY ATTEST TO THE UPRIGHT CONDUCT OF THIS NOBLEMAN, AND WHEN YOU RECOLLECT THAT MALEVOLENCE HAS ENDEAVOURED, MORE THAN ONCE, TO FASTEN HER FANGS IN SUCH A CHARACTER, you will neither wonder nor lament that *you have been overtaken by reproach*.

My Lord, there are persons whose applause bears no affinity to fame. Your Lordship has concluded upon the fact. You have acted accordingly. You have not abstained from the performance of those duties which you thought becoming the

duties to *loyal*

loyal subject and *lover* of his country, however faction might threaten to revile. You have dared to do "the thing that was right," though the world might censure. You have dared to use your own reason, though, by doing so, you were certain of exposing yourself to all the rancour of party.

But what, my Lord, can the *rancour of party* effect?—Though every Quixote of the quill assumes the giant-port, and arrogates the threatening tone of Goliath, shall TRUTH shudder? TRUTH, my Lord, who inherits the sling of David?

Yet, however incapable public abuse may be of accomplishing those ignoble purposes to which it is too generally applied; however insufficient to stain the character of the illustrious, or to turn the patriot from his pursuits, it were devoutly to be wished, that it had never appeared as a shade in our national character; a character, my Lord, of which, you are well aware, generosity, public spirit, love of liberty, and philanthropy, are generally descriptive. The understanding which true science has ennobled, is incapable of so sordid an enjoyment. To commence war against reputation; to urge it, like the Indian from the covert of his wood; and to enjoy every cowardly attempt for the purpose of leveling superior characters, belongs but to the *little* and the *vulgar*: and the *meaner* the intellect, my Lord, the greater the delight; for
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it may be said as a truth, that *vanity* is ever at hand to fill a *vacuum* of mind.

But, my Lord, is this a season to promote disunion? Is this a season to excite complaint?—A person, methinks, who had known us but during a short period, and was to form his opinion upon the numerous productions of our essayists, would conclude, that the national temper was *whimsical* indeed!—That we were a people, passive and uncomplaining under accumulated distress; but violent and querulous, while LIBERALITY was eager to open her *many hands* to bless us—That we were sentimentally generous to Britain, while suffering under the thralldom she had imposed; but virulently abusive at the moment of our emancipation—That, in a word, we could address her by the endearing appellation "*sister*," when she was too much our tyrant; and call her *tyrant*, even at the period when, inspired by true wisdom, and excited by all the gracious influence of generosity, she had indeed become a sister.

My Lord, my Lord, in my poor apprehension, when *atonement* has been made, the *trespass* should be *forgotten*: nor, as I conceive, can it be deemed a proof of *manliness* of spirit to *cherish* resentment, when reasonable terms of accommodation have been freely proposed. Why then, my Lord, is invention *now* to be strained for newer terms of re-

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proach? Why are musty records explored; why authors, who have slept for ages in oblivion, called forth to furnish evidence of the uniform system of tyranny which *was* practised in this country? Of that grievous and unnatural policy which *has been* active to frustrate the hopes of Irish Industry? Of those cruelties which *were* perpetrated by a ruffianly military, under the sanction of British proscriptions? Of the waste of war, and more grievous famine, frequently excited to prey upon our devoted countrymen? Why *now*, my Lord, are all the censurable actions of Britain, for more than a century past, presented to the world with a copious commentary, and her virtues omitted in the list, if it be not to *favour the purposes of party*; if it be not to *promote difficulties* which the patriot would wish to prevent; to *embitter* those hearts with the rancour of hatred, which generosity wishes should overflow with the milk of brotherly kindness; and to *retard* a friendly reunion with our sister kingdom, which it is the general interest to promote?

My Lord, were I to exhibit the insolence and injustice of Strafford, as proofs of depravity in our present Chief Governor, would it not seem an act of insanity? Yet, however weak and ridiculous such conduct might appear, *precedent* could be found to support it. The injustice of the first James, in depriving, indiscriminately, the landholders of Ulster of their possessions, for the purpose

pose of planting a colony of his countrymen therein: the scheme of depredation upon private property, planned and pursued in the succeeding reign; the many violations of justice committed by that *popularly elected* tyrant Cromwell, with various other circumstances, from a review of which humanity would recoil, have been introduced to my countrymen, with little effect I trust, as so many testimonies of the faith which, at present, we should repose in Great-Britain. This indeed, my Lord, is, literally "*visiting the children for the sins of their fathers,*" IS DAMNING THE VIRTUES OF THE PRESENT AGE FOR THE VICES OF THE PAST!

I have asked, my Lord, if this be a time for complaint, *this!* while the harvest of our hopes is ripening into perfection?—My Lord, when our gracious Sovereign had been constitutionally informed that "no temporizing expedients could save this nation from destruction, but a free and unlimited trade to all her ports," was relief protracted, or given "grudgingly and of necessity?"—Happy Ireland shall answer in the negative, shall honestly confess, that she has received, not only *what* she asked, but even *more* than modesty would have permitted her to ask.

Your Lordship, like the majority of your countrymen, who are candid enough to avow the real

sentiments of the heart, has felt this liberality and expressed your content. You have spoken from yourself, and for yourself.—Pardon me, my Lord, you have spoken for a truly respectable number of the people, who applaud your conduct——You have acted openly. You have exercised a privilege, which is claimed by the meanest of the community, of explaining your sentiments, and have been accused of presumption, *by a few*. But, my Lord, if you are to receive the applause of *those* to whom I allude, but by hushing the admonitory voice of conscience, by renouncing your understanding, and becoming an infidel to reason, I sincerely hope you will *long* live, and be abused *while* you live.

Whatever, my Lord, is yet wanting, to give fruition to the wishes of the most craving amongst us, may, I am persuaded, be obtained by the decent and prudent applications of the moderate. Those only, who, whatever their ostentatious professions of patriotism are, have been disappointed by the ready compliance and chearful liberality of Britain; those only, to whom the storm of civil dissension is tuneable as the breathing of the flute; those only, my Lord, who, “loving vice for itself,” consider their ability to promote mischief as the prop of their consequence, will dispense their political spells to excite the horrors of despair. Such magicians, however, can influence but the vulgar. The intelligent possess the wand whose touch
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can annihilate their power. The intelligent, therefore, will enjoy the good which God has given, and, by their happiness, shew how gratitude should exist. They are not to be misled by every ignis-fatuus-assertion, or deceived by declamation, however recommended by the embellishments of fancy. Has Britain, they will say, bestowed to us an invaluable pearl, and will she quarrel for the shell that contained it? Has she consented that we should send the Genius of our commerce forth to participate the wealth of the world, and will she renounce our alliance for ever, rather than part with a *nominal good*, with less than the *shadow of the substance* which we have already obtained, WITH A SUPREMACY WHICH, IT IS CERTAIN, IS AT THIS MOMENT, BUT A CAPUT MORTUUM TO SCARE THE WEAK.

I am, with every sentiment of respect for your character and worth,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's most obedient,

and devoted Servant,

March 30, 1780.

P. LEYAL.

TO HIS GRACE THE
DUKE OF LEINSTER.
LETTER II.*

On the Temper of the Times.

MY LORD,

AMONG the variety of *singular* customs which were peculiar to the antient Persians, there was one of so extraordinary a nature, that history,

* The original copy of this letter was first sent for publication, to the Conductors of the Free-Press ; who, in their paper of the 11th April last, promised that it should appear "*as soon as possible*." The author waited several days in expectation that their *promise* would be *verified*. But, finding, in the mean while, that they introduced some essays to the public, of a temper differing from his, which were of *later* date, and in length perhaps *more extensive*, he, by a letter of the 22d of the same month, insisted upon an immediate restoration of the copy ; which was returned the following day, to a friend of his, together with a *note* from the Committee, expressly in these terms.

"The Conductors of the Freeman's Journal inform P. Leyal, that it was their intention, to have published his essay, or so much of it as they might have found room for, on Tuesday ; had not the necessity of giving the public the parliamentary intelligence in full prevented them. If P. Leyal would divide his essays, limiting each division to *one or two columns*, they should always find *early* and *ready* admission ; but when the length of a production exceeds the necessary bounds of a news paper, it is impossible to gratify the writer in point of *time*, unless by disobliging numerous correspondents."

It

history, I believe, cannot produce its parallel. Upon the demise of a King, the nation at large was, during the course of five days, encouraged to persevere in promoting *anarchy*, in pursuing every *violence* of *excess*. Nor was a political motive wanting to countenance a practice in which ages had concurred. It was thought that a general experience of the evils of *commotion*, of the murders, robberies, and mischiefs, which *anarchy* never fails to produce, would not only be a strong encouragement of public fidelity to the successor to the throne, but universally promote a true relish for the joys of civil society. †

If, my Lord, in those early and comparatively unenlightened ages, it was thought prudent, even by so *desperate* a mode, to excite in the minds of a peo-

It is somewhat extraordinary indeed, that gentlemen who, from the specimen they had of Leyal's ability, thought themselves warranted, as proveditors for the public-taste, to say that his essays, being limited to the length of two columns, "*should always find early and ready admission*" into their paper, have so far renounced their own sentiments, as now, reproachfully to oppugn those writings which, but lately, they had at least tacitly praised. Were his essays unworthy the public attention, the *respect*, due by the committee to *that public*, should have marked them for immediate rejection : but if, on the contrary, they were entitled to some degree of notice, (as is insinuated in the lines above-quoted) it is submitted to the intelligent, whether those *animadversions*, which were lately published in the Freeman's Journal, are the *peevish cavils* of a party, or the honest criticisms of dispassionate reason.

† Vide Herodot. lib. I. cap. 96 and sequent.

a people, a just and lasting idea of the regard which is due to the *civil*, that only *pure, rational, and, indeed, natural state*,* how should confusion flush the cheeks of those who, in times *illuminated by true philosophy and religion*, instead of endeavouring to promote an UNION OF THE WILLS of all the members of society, so that there should be but *one wish*, and that for the *general good*—Instead of endeavouring to intimidate *those*, who from *ignorance or malevolence* would disturb the *public repose*, exhibit a banner whose motto is—DIVIDE;—and, prostituting ability to the worst purposes, sordidly labour to promote *licentiousness*, though convinced that the father of the universe, in all his works, has exhibited a love of order, and that nothing can delight him more, as the eloquent Cicero has expressed it, than civil society *lawfully* established. †

What, my Lord, is civil society, but an *incorporation of the many under the governance of a Sovereign to whom certain rights have been transferred*, by whose protection, beneficence and care, they are to be established in the enjoyment of those blessings to which

* The intelligent Burlemaqui defines civil liberty to be *natural liberty itself* divested of that part which constituted the *independence of individuals*, by the authority which it confers on sovereigns. Vide Princip of Polit. Law, chap. 3.

† Nihil est illi principi deo, qui omnem hunc mundum regit, quod quidem in terris fiat acceptius, quam consilia cœtusque Hominum Jure sociatæ, quæ Civitates appellantur.

which they *reasonably* aspire? This *fellowship* of interests,* to speak again from Tully, this acquisition of strength established by *union*, is perfectly similar to the combined power of the members of the human frame. Separate those members, and their energy is totally lost.—*Conjunctively*, my Lord, and but *conjunctively* the strength of each is increased, and an active and vigorous body is formed. This is no abstruse hypothesis—It is a doctrine to which intelligence must assent, and which even ignorance may comprehend.

To retain the figure, my Lord—These nations have nothing to fear but from a separation of their members.—Strong in a fraternal attachment to each other, we might look upon the boldest endeavours of France and Spain, as upon the *trembling efforts of an antiquated Paralytic*.—When Hannibal had been a fourth time victorious over the Roman force—when two hundred thousand citizens of that state had fallen by his sword—when the Scipios, whose glory can never die, had expired in its cause; and when its naval losses were great indeed; what, my Lord, *retarded the fate of Rome*? What but *the unanimity of her sons*; that unanimity which is so much wanting to us, and which alone would make us **A MATCH FOR THE WORLD?**

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* Emphatically called in scripture, "a divine institution."

If any thing can aggravate the offence of those who, from interested motives, or a disposition delighting in mischief, endeavour to destroy the peculiar circumstance upon which our security depends, and to prevent that reciprocal barter of affection which renders life delightful, it is their doing it under a pretence of *love* to their country, under the mask of *affection* to mankind.

However I may condemn an assumption of the patriotic character in such, I could venerate PATRIOTISM in a naked Scythian.—Yes, my Lord, I can venerate it as well in the unlettered Mexican, who, to overcome the Christian barbarian whose business was to destroy, would have devoted himself to death;* as in my illustrious countryman of old, when flinging himself into the ocean, that the invader of his country might perish.†—I can venerate

* Vide Robertson's Hist. Amer.

† When the Danes, the history of whose ravages in this kingdom affords striking instances of the fatal consequences that arise from the accursed spirit of faction, had captured the brave Ceallachan, who was deservedly beloved by his people, their resentment, not to be assuaged, inflamed them with a resolution to perish or liberate their prince. The invaders, alarmed at the vigorous preparations carried forward in all parts of the kingdom for this purpose, removed the Irish chief and those other heroes who participated his fate, on board their fleet, then lying in the bay of Dundalk, with a determination of conveying them to Denmark. If all the fury of the Irish had been fired at the bare loss of liberty to their king, what must have been the feelings of those who had taken up arms for his

venerate it as well in the rustic CINCINNATUS, who, having conquered for his country, could return to his plough, as in the youthful NASSAU when rejecting sovereignty to save a nation.—

PATRIOTISM!—it is the *exaltation* of life! the *nobility* of the noble! the *dignity* of human nature! it is the *immortal spark* of animation that quickens all the nobler faculties of the soul! it is the *feature* of the *human character* that distinguishes man from the irrational creation more than even the majesty of his form!—But, my Lord, how are we to look for the operation of PATRIOTISM in a public

his deliverance, upon beholding him ignominiously bound to the mast of a Danish vessel?—Their wrath seemed more than human!—They fought accordingly—They were irresistible.—Fáilbhe, who commanded the Irish navy, regardless of safety, regardless of every thing but the freedom of his sovereign, soon boarded the Danish admiral, and, forcing his way “through blood and slaughter,” cut the cords with his own sword which had bound Ceallachan, whom he caused to be removed to an Irish vessel. But, though this hero seemed more than man, he was not immortal! Overborne by numbers, he fell at last; and his head being cut off by order of the Danish chief, was exposed to view, for the purpose of dismaying the Irish. It had a contrary effect.—Fingall, now the first in command, calling to his countrymen to follow him, advanced to Sitrick, the Danish general, and grasping him in his arms, plunged instantly into the sea! Two other heroes, fired with the glory of this action, seized upon the brothers of Sitrick, and emulating the conduct of their now lifeless commander, jumped overboard and perished together!—The consequences were propitious, for the Danish fleet was destroyed.—Such, my countrymen, are the advantages of unanimity—Such the force of Irish spirit, which is, as it has always been, equal to every thing in a just cause.

public character?—Are we to look for it in an *uniform* opposition to the measures of government?—I fear, my Lord, this has been too commonly the practice. I fear it is owing to such a procedure that the idea of *Delinquency* is so frequently associated with that of *office*. But, were the voice of sober reason to be heard, we should learn that *uniformity* of opposition *must* be wrong. If I have rightly read, my Lord, no character is so contaminated as to be totally destitute of worth. Nor am I less certain that there has never been a government so deplorably mean, as to exhibit no emanation of virtue. The tyranny of the thirty in Athens, of Tiberius in Rome, and of Richard in England, are sufficient proofs of the fact.

Opposition, though sometimes a virtue, is frequently a vice. The patriot will discriminate:—he will oppose when he ought—he will support when he should. Heedless of men, my Lord, he will look to measures, and, indifferent by whom the commendable proposition is made, he will *defend* it for its *worth*. In a word, he is the votarist of virtue for her own loveliness; and, however capable of welcoming applause if it comes, can remain contented with the *deep-felt enjoyment of an applauding heart*.

While free to such a banquet, my Lord, what, comparatively, is the applause, I will not say of
a nation

a nation, but of an individual little and unknown? Yet, my Lord, you will recollect with pleasure, that honesty of intention stamped value upon a mite; and that she of Zarephath, who, in the day of scarcity, “when the Heavens had been shut up for three years and six months, had but her hand-full of meal” to share with a stranger, presented a feast luxuriously rich.—Unknown as I am to your Grace, you cannot doubt the sincerity of my declarations. To support the cause of justice, I have vindicated your conduct. It is not the *man*, it is the *motive*, my Lord, impels my pen; for, however humble my station, I dare boast a mind that has independence in its gift; a mind that informs me of the many good wishes I owe to my country; that informs me how much it is my duty at this important crisis, to endeavour to promote *unanimity*, and to convince even the meanest among my countrymen, that to be a GREAT, we must be a VIRTUOUS nation.

And what moment, my Lord, could afford so many arguments for *unanimity* as the present? Pregnant with blessings, if we will enjoy them, as the time is; restored as we are to a right of profiting in the utmost extent, by the product of a country, whose climate nature has attuned with her sweetest breath, and whose soil, though it boasts not a progeny in the olive and vine, is mellowed by the stores of fertility; possessed as we are of freedom

dom of commerce, and of all the enjoyments of *civil liberty*, what is wanting to the *completion* of our happiness? what has the *avarice* of *fancy* to require?—Yet, my Lord, there are objects of discontent; and the murmuring of complaint, in some measure, unharmonizes the almost general joy.

Had we been asked by ministry, at a period when there *was*, indeed, occasion for discontent, what terms would satisfy us and secure our affection to our sister kingdom, we might have answered in the words which the Ambassador of the Præternates addressed to the Roman senate—"Si bonam dederitis, fidem et perpetuam; si malam haud diuturnam."*—Since the terms accomplished to us *are* good, and so long as no foreign legislature arises to interrupt them, of which, I flatter myself I shall be able to prove there can be no danger, *peace* and *affection* on our part, *cheerfully* and *inviolably* to be observed, are duties from which the generous spirit of our nation can never wish to recede.

My Lord, though this is the case,—though we have attained not only *what* we asked, but even *more* than we asked, *a something*, in the newly adopted opinion of several, is yet wanting to the completion of the gift.

"That SOMETHING, *unpossess'd,*
"Corrodes and leavens all the rest."

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* Livy. Vide lib. viii. cap. 20.

But, my Lord, whether our country would be happier, if their wishes were consummated, is, in the opinion of many others, rather apocryphal.

In discussing this point, I shall candidly submit my sentiments, or those of more intelligent characters, to the consideration of your Grace, and of my countrymen. I wish not to succeed, if wrong. If right, I am certain of success. I write *not* to offend. My honest, though humble attempt, is directed to *inform*.

The act of POYNING, my Lord, which has been the topic of public argument for more than a century, though it may *scare* at present, was once *popular* and *admired*. However it altered or encroached upon the antient constitution of parliament, the power it transferred was *not only* proper but *indispensably* necessary to the *well-being* of this country, which, at the time it was assumed, was "too much in the hands of the Irish chiefs*." It operated immediately as a check upon the violent ascendancy of those viceroys over corrupt parliaments, who, of themselves, often passed laws which militated against the general interests of the king and kingdom; while it obtained to the people the more immediate protection of their Sovereign, whose absence, in a great measure, was compensated by the existence of his privy council here. Such,

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* Vide Warner's Hist. Ireland, vol. i. p. 109.

my Lord, were the *early* consequences of the act; and, although by the agency of the privy council some favourite bills may have been withheld from the royal eye, it is considered as exceedingly doubtful by many of your countrymen, whether, *down to these times*, its operations, upon the whole, have not been propitious to the interests of the nation.

How, my Lord, is the public wish to be gratified by the repeal of Poyning's Law? The disgust of the complainants seems directed against a power *intervening* between them and their King. And is *that* power to be annihilated by abrogating the act? Directly the contrary. The hydra, though banished hence, will still exist. Though a repeal, or modification, of the offensive law should, as to the case under consideration, dispel "*like the baseless fabrick of a vision*," the power of a council, which is formed chiefly of our countrymen,—of characters illustrious and wealthy, popular and beyond the reach of corruption, who are sworn to execute their trust with fidelity, we must still submit to the *intervention* of strangers; of those who are alike *independent* of our favour, and *fearless* of our threats; who are not *immediately* to *partake* of our prosperity, or to *participate* our distress. Besides, my Lord, a bill of parliament, transmitted by the privy council of Ireland, carries with it, as some imagine, a *second* sanction; and, as they further conceive, must certainly appear to the King and the British council,

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with as *consequential* a recommendation as the kingdom *could* give it.

Indeed, my Lord, by a repeal of Poyning's act, some future chief governor—for of the benevolence, sincerity, and understanding of the present, we have every reason to be convinced—would certainly acquire new opportunities of *injuring* but not of *serving* this nation. Whereas, were matters to remain as at present, the opinion of the council could not fail of having considerable influence upon his conduct; for, although it is not to be imagined that his sentiments would, at all times, be coincident with those of that body, it must be supposed he would more strictly attend to the delicacy of circumspection, while there were so many witnesses to his actions, than if those witnesses did not exist. It must be supposed, I say, that, however his sentiments may militate against the interests of Ireland, a regard to character and decorum will, it is likely, prevent an exertion, on his part, of any baleful influence to *damn* what they may *adopt*. At present, the opinion of a chief governor must be known, in a great measure, to the council; but, were the law of Poyning to be repealed, a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in all matters relating to legislation, could act as privately as a mute in a Turkish seraglio. Though *seldom*, he would *sometimes* have it in his power to strangle the hopeful progeny of our parliament, without a fear

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of being detected in the political assassination. I say, the law of Poyning being repealed, we make *no* friends, but may *lose* the interference of *many*, who, from their connections, I believe to be as *able*, as from their inclinations they are *willing* to serve us. These, my Lord, are the sentiments, not of an individual, but of a numerous and respectable part of the community, who cannot imagine that the longer existence of this statute should, for a moment, retard that *perfect re-union* of the sister kingdoms, which is *indispensably necessary* to the *welfare* and *security* of *both*.

Since, my Lord, the powers communicated by this act to the privy council, have not prevented us from acquiring a code of laws which are at once a perfect honour and security to our country,—since, if it ceased to operate, our bills of parliament would be still liable to be discussed, and their return to us opposed at times by an intermediate power, who, if even *generously* attached to our interests, might, in this case, not only be misinformed as to our real necessities, but obliged, too frequently, to found opinion upon the representations of a Lord Lieutenant, or perhaps some malicious and less respectable character—Since, though this act should be as *immortal* as *virtue* itself, we shall *still* be *free*, and *may* be *happy*, I confess, my Lord, my understanding is too dim to perceive the national injury that may arise from the continuance of the agency
of

of the privy council. On the contrary, I think, and my opinion is submitted with the utmost deference to your Grace and the public, that, by annihilating their power, we throw ourselves upon *chance*, and too probably *lose* friends without a possibility of *gaining* any.—On the whole, my Lord, I am too well convinced of the good understanding of my countrymen, to suppose they can waste their wishes upon an object by no means essential to their welfare, while every blessing courts their enjoyment which is necessary to its perfection: I am too well aware, my Lord, of the generosity of Ireland, to imagine, that it can continue any longer *the temper of the times*, to carry on a *warfare* which, at best, *is but a warfare for shadows*.

I have the honour of being,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's most obedient

And most humble Servant,

April 7th, 1780.

P. LEYAL.

TO HIS GRACE THE
DUKE OF LEINSTER.
LETTER III.

On the Temper of the Times.

MY LORD,

IN my second letter I submitted many reasons to the consideration of your Grace and my countrymen, which induced me to believe, that a repeal of the law of Poyning would, in all probability, subject the nation to real and lasting *inconveniences*, without producing any *substantial good*. I argued upon the impossibility of *removing*, by a *modification or repeal*, that object of popular disgust, that *intervening power*, which, in the great business of legislation, must *ever* have an agency between our sovereign and his people—I urged the impropriety, the almost positive danger of *innovating* upon a *constitution* under which our fathers and ourselves have been happy ; a *constitution* which places freedom as a sentinel at the door of the peasant as well as of the prince, and gives *safety* to our *persons* and *security* to our *effects*—I intimated the imprudence of relinquishing a present good upon a presumption of obtaining a greater, for which we should be obliged to penetrate into the glooms of futurity—And, I reprobated the idea of making the bosoms of *strangers* the sanctuary of our confidence, rather than the *consciences* of those for whose attention to our national welfare, were even the
ties

ties of country and consanguinity no longer of force, a *great property* is an *absolute bond*. Yet, my Lord, although to these arguments others could be added, others as forcible and cogent against the repeal or modification of this act, I confess, would my reason constantly permit me, to unite *infallibility* with the proceedings of *any* body of men, of *any* parliament, even of the *present*, which can never be sufficiently venerated by an obliged nation, I should renounce them all as no longer utible. But, if former parliaments have, in some cases, *been wrong*, future parliaments, my Lord, may *likewise err*; and, in that case, it cannot surely be adverse to the welfare of this kingdom, but, in all likelihood, will be propitious to its interests, that a body exists, who may correct the error*.

However it may be the temper of *modern* politics to speak or expect otherwise, I own, my Lord, I can-

* It is almost universally acknowledged, that, if the act of POYNING were repealed, the PEERAGE, who are accountable but to themselves, would arise in importance upon the ruins of the *privy council*, over whom the commons have an *unquestionable controul*. The power taken from the one would be *transferred*, and might be *constitutionally* employed, in its fullest extent of operation, by the other. Since this is the case, and since power is known to be the darling object of human wishes, I own it is a matter of amazement to me, that those who have turned from its approaches, should be maligned for their conduct. The time has been when such *self-denial* would have been called *virtue*; when *public applause* would have been thought an *insufficient reward* for a Duke of Leinster, who could reject an increase of consequence to himself, from an opinion of its being inconsistent with the welfare of his country.

I cannot unite an idea of *perfection* with the proceedings of *any* legislature I have known or read of. Attended as our laws have been with all the watchfulness of care in their progress to the public, how *many*, my Lord, have we seen, which, insufficient for the purposes of their origination, have, like the *Ephemeron*, been *young* and *old* in a day. Yet, whatever errors a legislative body may commit, surely they need not the apology of a blush, so long as it appears that they are not the progeny of the will. My Lord, could I hope to discover *infallibility*, I should seek for it in the *collective* body of the people. But, even *there*, amongst that numerous and intelligent association of men, I am persuaded, if a safe opinion may be formed from the *history* of *human nature*, I should make my enquiry with as great a probability of success, for that *perfect freedom*, whose body is an *idea*, and whose existence is a *whim*!—I submit, my Lord, with all due deference, to the old apothegm, *vox populi vox dei est*; but my submission is *frequent* not *uniform*; *temporary* not *constant*; for, there have been times when, without an insult to truth, I think I could apply to the public opinion what was spoken of the nightingale, "*vox & præterea nihil!*"

There is a material difference, my Lord, between *thinking* we *are* right and being *absolutely* so; yet, that difference, great and momentous as it is, that difference is frequently overlooked by those who, assuming

assuming infallibility even over the infallible, too often presume to guide the opinion of the multitude.

If you look, my Lord, into our periodical essayists, and suppose they speak for and from themselves, what judgment must you form? Methinks your conclusion will be, that they have persuaded themselves into a belief of having found the political *panacea* which shall *heal* all the *maladies* of the *state*, of being possessed of the *pure*, the *unfailing* opinion which shall *rectify* the *mistakes* of an erring *nation*. Whether you examine him whose wisdom is a metaphor and whose persuasion is the prettiness of a phrase—who, as if he thought there was no feast in enough, spreads forth abundance 'till it cloy—whose bellows through the trumpet of *sedition* for the *holy* purpose of securing peace to futurity; and, big with sufficiency, that incurable dropsy of the mind, wonders, while he bellows, that the walls of *Jerico* do not fall!—Whether, my Lord, you consider the lucubrations of *this* genius, or review the productions of his indefatigable *compeer*, who, with a fair road before him, delights to go “round and round and round about,” creating for himself, in the course of his political peregrination, as many wanderings and windings as distinguished the labyrinth of *Crete*—who scorns a retrospect to the *golden blessings* which have been obtained, but sees through a *microscope* the *atom* that is *withheld*—whose discussions are as intimately connected as are the
interests

interests of your Grace and the Incas of Peru—who has drudged through a century of pages to prove, at last, that the operations of the British declaratory act are “*distant and remote*” (he should have added as futurity can make them)—who would evince the *fervor* of his *patriotism* by exciting *diffension*; the diffusive *extent* of his *benevolence* by promoting “*sorrow and heaviness of heart* ;” and, in fine, his Christian charity, by manifesting an inclination to plunge a dagger into the hearts of his countrymen, lest, from a suspicion that the *declaratory act* should operate to the prejudice of their posterity a *thousand years* hence, they should linger in despair. I say, my Lord, whether you examine the writings of those coadjutors in politics, or look down, down, down to the humble though not less earnest endeavours of “*Justice*,” that censor of the morals of *others*, that critic, who is so much devoted to *perfect liberty*, as to scorn obedience even to the *arbitrary* restrictions of grammar, the character I have drawn will be found equally apposite to each. He who writes to *distress* government, affects to deliver an *infallible* opinion; many who read become as *infallible* as the writer; and *Infallibility* thus sent abroad, may be found at length to assume the *Pontificalibus* as well in a smoaky cottage as in the vatican of Rome. My Lord, my Lord, it is not enough with *those* writers to suppose a public character *may* have erred. If *they* think so, vain the arguments of Demosthenean reason, vain the efforts

of

of charity, though she pleads with the tongue of an angel, to stay the hasty sentence.—If *they think so*, he *must have erred*.

To this imprudent temper of the times,—a temper fully sufficient to quench the glowing spark of public spirit in any bosom but that of the veteran patriot;—a temper fully sufficient, if any thing *can* be so, to prevent our illustrious peerage (who represent *but* themselves, who are the only judges of their own rights, which it cannot with reason be imagined, they will fail to maintain with becoming dignity and wisdom) from engaging in the cause of the people but at a distance, and with all the timidity of an insulted friend. To this imprudence of temper, my Lord, it is to be ascribed, that *you*, and *not a few others*, whose dearest existence is in the welfare of this kingdom, have recently participated the abundance of newspaper abuse, for having acted with that *nobility* of sentiment towards your country, and of that *loyalty* and *gratitude* towards your Prince, which were *suitable* to the occasion, and *becoming* to the *character* of those who had *uniformly supported the concerns of the public*. To this imprudence of temper it is to be ascribed, that innumerable attempts have been made to prevail upon the people to believe, in contradiction to their own senses, that their fathers and themselves have been *slaves* under a constitution which, notwithstanding the existence of a privy council and of a declaratory act, and in spite of our political *tran-*

substantiators, has *preserved*, and shall still *preserve us free*. And, to this temper it is to be imputed, that *she* who was the *darling* of our hopes, the *idol* of our adoration,—*she* who was to have exalted us amongst the proudest nations of the earth, has been of late but rarely spoken of, or spoken of with contempt, because *she* was not to be seen with a *repeal* in one hand, and a *declaration* in the *other*.—My Lord, the folly of the day seems to be a *love of novelty*. *Unessential* objects engross our embraces, while *substantial* blessings woo us but woo us in vain. We follow phantoms, and in the puerile pursuit are totally *lost* to our *native land*, though now like a pearl upon the bosom of the deep.

I am well aware, my Lord, how much I hazard by touching upon the character of our party-writings. I am aware I hazard still more, by dissenting from the generally received opinion, that the public *must be right*. But, were an apology necessary, my *motive* should be urged. I know, my Lord, that in the breasts of a *few*, a mighty *mischief* may be nursed, a *fire* may be kindled to set a nation on *flame*. Civil *commotion* is rather the offspring of the "*Lusts that war in our members*," than the *child* of *opinion* and *principle*. Those from whom it originates are generally few; who, being urged by their passions, pride, avarice, or revenge, are indefatigable in propagating erroneous notions, and, unhappily for the welfare of society, find it a task but *too easy* to

to seduce the multitude, who, in general, are either *too credulous*, or *too indolent*, to think for themselves. Hence it has been that memorable revolutions have followed from trivial causes; and hence again the *few* may *multiply* into the *many*, and much evil may be done by a people even with a *good* intention. I could spare a tear to the seduced, my Lord, however I might execrate the seducers. I could spare a sigh of forgiveness to those, who, thinking not or incapable of thinking for themselves, could be hurried on by misrepresentation FROM DISCONTENT TO DISAFFECTION—FROM DISAFFECTION TO DISLOYALTY,—AND FROM DISLOYALTY TO THE WORST DEED A CITIZEN CAN PERPETRATE. For these reasons, my Lord, I hold it incumbent upon me, as a member of society, ambitious of *deserving*, though less solicitous of *obtaining* the reputation of a good citizen, to endeavour to frustrate the anxious efforts of those *artful* or *malicious spirits*, who, as if in *love* with *infamy*, seem eager to *immortalize* their names by an act of *parricide*!—Yes! my Lord, by an act of *parricide*!—by plunging a dagger into the bosom of their country, and at the moment of her existence, when, recruiting from a *tedious consumption*, and exhibiting, in some degree, the *genial flush* of health, filial affection should urge every struggle of *care*, and all the generous ingenuity of *art* to *perfect* her *recovery*. My Lord, when the pulse of the nation is *feverish*, what honest physician would seek to in-

flame?—But, since this is attempted,—and let the times blush that it is,—shall not an effort be made to administer an *antidote* against the fiery *poison*?

Anxious though I am, my Lord, that my countrymen should retain a becoming sense of their national importance, I confess, nevertheless, I am wishful that, in future, they may annex an idea of *infallibility* more rarely than heretofore, to the *public opinion*, or what is generally called so. If it be possible that the majority of the people in their political capacity *may err*, (and that it is, I have no doubt) to cherish an idea of the *infallibility* of their own opinion may prove of *fatal* consequence on some future occasion. He, my Lord, who is persuaded of the propriety of his sentiments, must be *modest* and *generous* indeed, if he secedes from his argument, and suffers an opponent to boast. *Such* a temper, however, may sometimes dictate such conduct. But the ignorant, my Lord, are as vain as blind, and as obstinate as vain. Bigotted to their own opinion, they will yield any thing rather than an argument; and, in no species of argumentation are they so violent, as in the discussion of political affairs, which, of all others, they least understand. If this be true, as I conceive it is, and if the majority of every nation is composed of such characters, how easily may the public opinion be warped, how easily may civil dissension be excited? Yes, my Lord, it may be *easily* excited, though to appease
its

its effects may be as impossible at times, as to hush the ragings of *Ætna*. While there is food for conflagration the *Volcano* will burn, and to supply that food is adapted to the puny capacity of every little jaundiced politician, who, lost to the social delights of life, would reduce others to a level with *himself*. I trust, my Lord, even the meanest of my countrymen, will speedily become able to detect the arts that are daily practised to deceive them; and that no *bankrupt* in *reputation* may be able in future, to seduce them from their *own* interests to support *his*, by an artful use of that *flattering* but *ill-founded* doctrine of the infallibility of the public opinion.

My Lord, these sentiments, however *novel* they may now appear, are almost as *old* as the *history of time*, and are warranted by the annals of the most numerous and illustrious nations that have peopled the earth. *Were* the Israelites *infallible* when they compelled Aaron to set up the golden calf in the wilderness, and celebrated a festival in its honour?—Yet they *thought* they were right. Were the same people *infallible* when, upon hearing the report of the spies, they tumultuously demanded a captain to lead them back into Egypt?—Yet they *thought* they were right. Were the Athenians *infallible* when they voted the expulsion of the illustrious Aristides?—Yet they *thought* they were right. Were the Roman citizens *infallible* when Camillus

was

was banished?—Yet they *thought* they were right. Were the people of England *infallible* when, hurried by *faction* from *violence* to *violence*, they *stained* the nation with *blood*, *massacred* their king, *overset* the *constitution*, and, instead of removing, *established* a *tyranny* in the person of Cromwel, which stands unrivalled in the history of the world?—Yet they too *thought* they were right. These, my Lord, are a *few* of the thousand instances that might be adduced not only of the important *difference* there is between a general opinion that a nation is right, and its *being* so, but of the fatal force of faction; of the national calamities that originate in a spirit of *innovation*; of the dangers of *subverting* the *public* *peace*, from a *wild* hope of rendering it more *secure*; of the *imprudence* of incurring an immediate *evil* to accomplish a *remote* *good*; and of advancing even by a *single* *step* towards *anarchy*, which has generally terminated in *that* *tyranny* which *opposition* is *calculated* to *prevent*.

I have the honour of being, with all that sincerity of respect, which is justly due to the real friend of his country,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's

Faithful, and most

Obedient Servant,

P. LEYAL.

To the AUTHOR of certain Essays which
have appeared under the Signature of
J U S T I C E.

*Sand and salt and a mass of iron, is easier to bear
than a man without understanding.*

Ecclus xxii. 15.

S I R,

HATED as I know myself to be by you and
your compeers, for having undertaken the
defence of injured Honour; and, ambitious as I am
to make myself still more detestable to you and to
them, by continuing to exert my utmost abilities
in support of that cause, it is impossible you could,
it is impossible any of your party can address me,
but in the stile of *invective* which, so much to my
credit, you have adopted. Your *censure*, which is
involuntary praise, claims my acknowledgments;
and, should you violate your promise by writing to
me again, I trust you will honour me with the *like*
applause.

The obligation you have thus conferred, requires
a return. I will repay it by advice, by recom-
mending it to you no longer to imagine that *cavil*
is *argument*, or *abuse politicks*. Did you inherit the
skill of the immortal CHATHAM in the science of
government, scurrility would frustrate your hopes
of securing an interest in the public esteem, and
~~damn~~ the *cause* which you might attempt to *sup-*
port.

port. Would you be *thought* a patriot, Sir?—Re-
 fuse not to another that *freedom* of speech which
 you *demand* in its fullest extent. Would you *really*
deserve and consequently *enjoy* that enviable charac-
 ter?—seek it—not by your pen, for that can ne-
 ver enable you to climb the Pelion of your wishes;
 but, if of so much good you may be capable, by
 teaching the people to raise a blade of grass where
 none has grown already; to cultivate a grain of
 flax-seed more successfully than it can be cultivat-
 ed at present; to twist the vegetable fibre into a
 finer thread; to give the fleece a livelier dye, and
 to form it into a more valuable manufacture—Or,
 should nothing so nationally important, be within
 the compass of your abilities, communicate *one*
 new political truth, or shew yourself *even willing*
 to effectuate the ten thousandth part of the public
 good, which has been atchieved by the illustrious
 peer, whom your procreant genius has so repeat-
 edly honoured with abuse, and I will be the first to
 meet your wishes—to give you praise, till your
 desires can ask no more.

My debt being thus discharged, though Justice
 should be satisfied, Generosity is not. Wherefore,
 I beg permission to advise you, if you have any cre-
 dit to lose, to be more cautious, when you next
 assume the character of the philologer, than I have
 experienced you to be. It is observable, Sir, that
 your animadversions, which by no means *seem suf-*
ficiently concocted, are made upon my letters, as if
 you

you thought a corrector of the press as *infallible* as, in all your miscellaneous lucubrations, you have given the public occasion to believe, you *fancy* yourself. You have continued your insipid remarks without deviating in a *single* instance from the ungenerous purpose which, *it is evident*, you had proposed to yourself, that of catching at every error, (no matter how obviously of the press) and of charging each to my account. Yet, how has the industry which you exerted in studying line after line of my first letter, been rewarded? By noting *one* false monosyllable, and a literal error!—Though *great* your *toil*, *contemptible* has been your gleaning! Nevertheless, let me praise your perseverance as I praise the industry of the *mouse*, who, having gnawed without ceasing, until he opened to himself a passage through an *oaken board*, found the recompence of his labours in a *particle* of bran!

When you sat down determinedly to criticize, you should have remembered the fate of your animadversions upon a former occasion. You should have remembered that Thucydides* fairly routed you from the field, and have been cautious of again exposing yourself to the like disgrace. A malevolently unjust critic, Sir, is the meanest object of mercy, in the literary world. Yet, though you have *certainly* been such, I will not treat you as if you

* See his anatomy of the criticisms of Justice upon Pimbleco's letter.

you had forfeited every claim to my pity. I will defend myself, but seek not to injure you. I will establish the charge, brought against you, of disobeying the restrictions of grammar, not by *defending* to notice your *puny cavils* against a few literal errors, *obviously of the press*, but by *refuting*, upon the authorities of LOUTH and JOHNSON, every argument in your letter, which has the semblance of criticism.

You say, "as false concords bear the first rank
 "among literary offences, and for which" (should
 it not be, sagacious Sir, *for having made which?*)
 "few school-boys escape a flogging; can we well
 "suppose that *learned-elegant* writer" (or, if you
 please, *learnedly-elegant* writer) "that boasting-
 "grammarian, Mr. P. Leyal, is guilty of them;"
 (or rather *of having made them*.) Here, Sir, is a quo-
 tation of but *five* lines, from your elaborate piece
 of criticism, which exhibits *not fewer than three* of-
 fences against grammar; yet *two* errors, culled
 from almost an hundred times that quantity of writ-
 ing, and apparently of the press, have been re-
 presented by you, as unpardonable indeed—Be-
 sides, the following extract, which you made from
 my *first* letter, to prove my having formed false
 concords, by *no means* establishes your assertion.
 "To commence war against reputation, to urge it,
 "like the Indian, from the covert of his wood,
 "and to enjoy every cowardly attempt for the pur-
 "pose of levelling superior characters, *belongs* but
 "to

"to the little, &c." Your objection to the verb neuter *belongs*, is *ill founded*; and, as I could easily prove, *militates* against the practice of many of the *most classical* writers. LOUTH, Sir, whose authority I suppose you will not presume to controvert, says that "sometimes, after an enumeration of particulars, connected by copulative conjunctions, the *verb* follows in the *singular* number, and is *understood* as *applied* to each of the preceding terms: as—Sand and salt and a mass of iron, is easier to bear than a man without understanding."* This doctrine sufficiently authorises the use I made of the verb neuter "*belongs*," and consequently, exposes you to censure and contempt for the *meaness* and *falsity* of your puerile cavil!

Little ingenuity as you are pleased to allow me, Sir, you must confess I am at least capable of transcribing a few lines from a Latin book. When I tell you that the quotation which afforded such scope for the exercise of your genius, is made from Livy, lib. viii. you will hardly suppose that I wrote from memory; and, as you could not object to its *applicability*, it follows, of course, that the errors which have given you so much delight, belong as truly to *yourself* as to me.

Forgetful that *repetition* is a figure of equal use and estimation, as frequently contributing to the strength

* See his grammar, Dub. edit. p. 79.

strength and elegance of a discourse, you seem inclined to eject it from English composition, as being absolutely superfluous. Were your wishes to prevail, unhappy would be the fate of many celebrated writers; nor would even the attic Swift escape, who found nothing criminal in such passages as these—"I sincerely look upon your Grace to be
 "master of as much *wisdom* and *sagacity* as any person I have known."*—"You have triumphed
 "by the steadiness of your temper over the *inconstancy* and *caprice* of your friends."†—"From
 "frequently reflecting upon the *course* and *method*
 "of educating youth, &c."‡—A thousand examples, as striking as these, might be adduced, from the most celebrated cotemporaries of Swift, to overcome your objection to the *conjunctive use* of the terms "*forcible* and *cogent*," which has proved so injurious to the uncommon susceptibility of your understanding. But, lest Swift should appear *too obsolete* to be quoted to one of your refinement, I shall take the aid of Johnson; who says, in his grammar, that the "cursory pronunciation of the
 "English tongue is always *vague* and *uncertain*;" and again, that "the solemn pronunciation, though
 "by no means *immutable* and *permanent*, is less remote from the orthography." Here, Sir, are terms, adopted by one of the greatest masters of the English language, which are much more nearly *al-*
lied

* Letter to Dr. King, Archbishop of Dublin.

† Letter to Lord Oxford.

‡ Essay on modern Education.

lied in signification, than those to which you have so frivolously objected ; for, let me assure you, Sir, the words "*forcible*" and "*cogent*" are not, as you imagine, absolutely synonymous. An argument, I would remind you, may sometimes be *forcible*, yet not *convincing*.—In fact, Sir, as you advance in your criticism, you reverse the ceremonial which was formerly observed in Spanish romances : a *dwarf* is not sent to announce the approach of a *giant* ; but you assume the *child-scaring* looks of a *giant*, and announce the approach of a *dwarf*.

Pray, Sir, is not the word "*pontificalibus*," by *adoption*, an English substantive of multitude ? If you deny its being such, I will produce the opinion of a good lexicographer, to confute you : but you dare not ; and, consequently, you must admit that it has no variation of case with respect to its termination. The word, Sir, requires nothing to establish its meaning as to its case, but the prefixing the sign of the case required. Yet, according to your criticism, we should, upon particular occasions, be obliged, in contradiction to the genius of the English tongue, to decline the word through as many cases as are common to Latin nouns. Indeed, Sir, you have shewn as *much ignorance of cases*, by asserting that, instead of saying "*to assume the pontificalibus*," I should have said, "*to assume the pontificalia*," as you would instruct the world to believe I have exhibited.

You

You insist that "the laws of grammar absolutely demand the *potential* or *subjunctive* mood after "the signs *although* and *if*," and, consequently, that when I wrote "although this *is* the case," I should have written "although this *be* the case." But, Sir, if you are right, Johnson, before whom, I fancy, without degradation to yourself you may bow as to a superior, is wrong; for, in the preface to his dictionary, he has the following passage: "Short directions are sometimes given where the sound of letters is irregular; and *if* they *are* sometimes omitted, &c." Now, Sir, according to the indispenability of your doctrine, the words "*if they are*" should stand, "*if they be*." But, however great your prowess in the literary field, I shall not fear you as antagonist, so long as the honour is mine of having Doctor Johnson for my auxiliary.

To conclude. You tautologically insist, that "not only a violation of mood *but* a false concord like-*wise*" appear in these words—"If the majority of every nation *is* composed"—"because" you add, "the *majority* of a nation *must certainly* be plural." But, if your modesty can spare a blush, will not your cheek be crimsoned when you hear Doctor Louth declare that "a noun of multitude or signifying many, may have the verb and pronoun agreeing with it either in the *singular* or plural number. "As—my people *is* foolish."—And again—"the assembly

"assembly *was* very numerous"—which, he adds, "is *much more* proper than *were* very numerous." Now, Sir, what becomes of your "*must certainly?*"

Thus, thou Phoenix of erudition, the hopes of thy many days labour, are ruined at once. I say, ruined at once; since, from the best authorities, I have proved your *criticisms* so many *contradictions* to *grammar*, and consequently censures upon yourself. Believe me, industrious Sir, however anxious thou art to appear a philologist, criticism is a science by no means adapted to his ability whose understanding is *moon-eyed*. Renounce it, I beseech thee; for what thou hast already produced is a *false conception*; or, if it will please thee better, I will call it a *phasm*, a *meer phasm*, to be seen but not felt; or, if for a moment it might have been felt, it is to be remembered, as one remembers the *incubus*, for its *monstrosity* alone!

Be assured, Sir, a regard for the cause in which I voluntarily engaged; a respect to the public, by whose attention I have been repeatedly honoured; and some anxiety to shew even to the humbler class of my countrymen, how far *you* are qualified

* See his grammar, p. 78. Though Louth, and some other grammarians, are satisfied that the *whole people* taken collectively, is *singular*, Mr. Justice may have had reasons for representing, by a *new* kind of arithmetic, the *majority plural*. Unfortunately, however, the *majority* is a *collective*, and not in his favour. *A part is not more than the whole.*

to direct their political faith, have *solely* influenced me to notice thy remarks. Yet, before I conclude my correspondence with *thee*, and *such as thee*, for ever, let me say, should this critique upon thy criticism deprive thee of a few meals, may some benevolent spirit whisper it in mine ear, that I may hasten, with all the cheerfulness of a friend, to assist thee with fifty. Mayest thou become a critic, as able as Bently, if criticism is to find thee food, without incurring any further, *his sin of inventing faults for others*. Or, if it be thy severer fate to support the spark of life by retailing politicks, may Truth touch thy lips; and, however poor, mayest thou become reputable by maintaining the cause of Justice and Honour, with as much earnestness, as thou hast long endeavoured to *damn* it. 5 JA 53

May 31, 1780.

P. LEYAL.

F I N I S.